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United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The present report is submitted in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 53/51 of 3 December 1998 on Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues, the operative paragraphs of which read as follows:

> "*The General Assembly*,
>
> "...
>
> "1. *Reaffirms* that the Palestine Arab refugees are entitled to their property and to the income derived therefrom, in conformity with the principles of justice and equity;
>
> "2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take all appropriate steps, in consultation with the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, for the protection of Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel, expresses its appreciation for the work done to preserve and modernize the existing records of the Commission, and requests the Secretary-General to complete this task;
>
> "3. *Calls once more upon* Israel to render all facilities and assistance to the Secretary-General in the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "4. *Calls upon* all the parties concerned to provide the Secretary-General with any pertinent information in their possession concerning Arab property, assets and property rights in Israel that would assist h , in the implementation of the present resolution;
>
> "5. *Urges* the Palestinian and Israeli sides, as agreed between them, to deal with the important issue of Palestine refugees' properties and their revenues in the framework of the final status negotiations of the Middle East peace process;

* A/54/150.

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"6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session on the implementation of the present resolution."

2. On 28 July 1999, the Secretary-General drew the attention of the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations to resolutions 53/46 to 53/52 of 3 December 1998, with the request that the Permanent Representative of Israel inform him by 10 September 1999 of any steps his Government had taken or envisaged taking in implementation of the relevant provisions of the resolutions.

3. Also on 28 July 1999, the Secretary-General sent a note verbale to all other Member States, drawing their attention to the relevant provision of resolutions 53/46 to 53/52, including paragraph 4 of resolution 53/51, and requesting information by 10 September 1999 concerning any action taken or envisaged in relation to their implementation.

4. A reply dated 23 August 1999 was received from Israel, covering various aspects of resolutions 53/46 to 53/52. The text reads as follows:

"Israel's position on these resolutions has been set forth in successive annual replies submitted to the Secretary-General in recent years, the latest of which being Israel's Note Verbale of 19 August 1998. Israel regrets the fact that the resolutions regarding the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) remain rife with political issues irrelevant to the work for which UNRWA is responsible, and thus remain detached from the reality in the area. Accordingly, Israel abstained on resolution 53/49 and voted against resolutions 53/46, 53/48, 53/50, 53/51 and 53/52.

"The resolutions concerning UNRWA must reflect the progress in the peace process, and the potential for further breakthroughs in the future. If this potential is to be harnessed, the peace process must receive encouragement and support from concerned parties in the region and the international community, including through the resolutions regarding the functioning of UNRWA.

"Israel believes that UNRWA can play an important role in promoting the social and economic advancement foreseen in the agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, within the limits of its humanitarian mandate, and accordingly looks forward to continuing the cooperation and good working relationship with UNRWA.

"In light of the above, Israel considers it essential that the General Assembly consolidate the resolutions regarding UNRWA into one resolution directly related to the Agency's humanitarian tasks. This would also be compatible with the necessity to rationalize the work of the General Assembly."

5. No replies have been received from other member States with regard to paragraph 4 of resolution 53/51.